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ADDRESS,

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THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

AT WILMINGTON, N. C.,

ON SABBATH, JULY 4th, 1847,

BY REV. I. O. STEDMAN,

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WILMINGTON:

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1847.

## C O R R E S P O N D E N C E .

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REV. AND DEAR SIR:

THE undersigned, in obedience to a spontaneous expression of the wishes and feelings of your congregation, beg leave, as their committee, and on our own behalf, to express to you the high gratification, as well as the profound interest excited by your discourse, delivered yesterday forenoon, on the occasion of our National Birthday, and to request that you will furnish a copy for publication; believing that a wide dissemination of the historical facts, and more especially the principles advocated in it, cannot fail to be productive of much good.

Very respectfully, &c.,

WM. O. JEFFREYS.

O. G. PARSLEY.

To Rev. J. O. STEDMAN.

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THE following address was prepared for the special instruction of the people of my charge, and without the remotest view to publication. I feel bound, however, though with unfeigned diffidence, to yield to the "spontaneous expression of the wishes and feelings of my congregation," and to submit the discourse to their disposal, hoping, with them, that it may be "productive of much good." To them it is most respectfully and affectionately dedicated. •

I will only add, that for a number of the facts, and for some of the sentiments expressed, I freely acknowledge myself indebted to the "Sketches of North Carolina," a most interesting and instructive volume, recently presented to the public, by Rev. WM. HENRY FOOTE.

J. O. STEDMAN.

Wilmington, N. C., July 16, 1847.

## A D D R E S S .

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PSALM XX. 7—9. "Some trust in chariots and some in horses : but we will remember the name of the LORD our GOD. They are brought down and fallen : but we are risen, and stand upright. Save, LORD : Let the King hear us when we call."

I have selected this passage of Scripture more as a motto than a text. And I have done so, with a view to the introduction of such reflections as may seem appropriate to the present occasion.

We are permitted this day to witness the return of the nation's Jubilee, and are called upon to rejoice in the 71st anniversary of the independence of a great and free people. We are reminded this day of that noble declaration of rights, adopted by the Representatives of the United States, in general Congress assembled, July 4th, 1776 ; in which declaration they solemnly announce they "hold these truths to be self-evident : that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights : that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ; that to secure these rights, governments have been instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

The annual recurrence of the day that witnessed the adoption of such a declaration as this, in support of which the high-minded and indomitable men who composed that As-

sembly, mutually pledged to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, sends a thrill of proud delight to the heart of every true American Patriot ; it kindles the eye of the aged with new fire, and causes the hearts of the young to pulsate quick and strong under the impulse of high, exulting and generous emotions. We think of it as a day that tried men's souls ; when *great* and *good* men, having suffered beyond all possible endurance, were determined to be free, and to "renounce forever their unfeeling oppressors ;" when, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions, they dissolved all political connexion between themselves and the people or parliament of Great Britain, and held them, as they held the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. They felt that the road to happiness and to glory was open equally to all, and were determined to pursue it or die in the attempt.

We think, too, of the sacrifices that were necessary to be made—of the sorrows, blood, lives, and treasures, that had to be expended in the accomplishment of this object. In fact, almost innumerable recollections crowd thick and fast upon our minds, and fill them to overflowing. And if we are not lost to all sense of our obligations to Him who controls the destinies of nations as of individuals, we shall not be wanting in expressions of gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for his merciful interposition in our behalf. This, to the true Christian, is the sweetest and best of all the reminiscences that flow through the soul like refreshing and invigorating waters. It was not for mere political rights and privileges that our forefathers contended, but in close and inseparable connexion with these were the great principles of freedom of conscience in matters of religion. It was on account of these more particularly that the great majority of them left their native homes, and came to what was then the great howling wilderness of the West. They were driven by the intolerance of religious bigotry in the old world, to seek an asylum in this, where they might sit under their own vine and fig-tree, and worship in all freedom and security. In



defence of these principles, they were willing to expend all their treasures, and to submit to any amount of sacrifice and suffering. In the language of another, "they always felt it better to endure all the protracted miseries of a Revolutionary struggle than fail to enjoy liberty of person, property and conscience. Their ideas of religious liberty gave a coloring to their political notions on all subjects ; perhaps it is more just to say, were the foundations of their political creed. The Bible was their text-book on all subjects of importance."— Their conscience, the feelings of their hearts and the actions of their lives, were all influenced, directed, and controlled by the principles of this blessed Book, and the strict doctrines of the reformation, in which they had been religiously trained. And they were only carrying out the principles of the Bible, and maintaining the rights guarantied them by the God of the Bible and of conscience, in their resistance to tyranny.— The same principles, carried out under like circumstances, will produce like results. They are the same in all climes where the Bible is received and studied, and to them we look, under God, for the redemption, regeneration, and disenthralment of the world. What they could and would do, had clearly been made manifest in the old world, before the removal of their stern and uncompromising advocates to this western hemisphere, much to the annoyance and discomfiture of intolerant and persecuting Kings and Parliaments. The soil of America was adapted to and prepared for their fuller and more rapid extension. It was here that, under the protection and guidance of Divine Providence, a vine was to be planted, like that which was brought out of Egypt, which was to take deep root, and fill the land. The hills were to be covered with the shadow of it ; she was to send out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches to the rivers ; thousands were to stand at a distance and admire her growing beauty ; while multitudes, driven by oppression, or eager to obtain in this favoured heritage the security and blessings they could never have enjoyed at home, were to hasten to seek shelter under its spreading foliage. Ten thousand voices from almost every

nation have been heard loudly to acclaim, "we will go with you ; for we have heard that you have a goodly portion, and that the Lord has spoken good concerning you."

Is it to be wondered at that our fathers should so carefully watch and nourish this young tendril of liberty, and should be jealous of encroachment upon the branch of the vineyard which the Lord was making strong for himself. When the enemy, in a spirit of reckless oppression, attempted to break down her hedges, to pluck her ripening fruit, and to put fire to her green and flourishing branches, and thus to lay waste and devour her, the sound of indignation, like the sound of many waters, burst forth from every quarter, and a feeling of manly independence and resistance to tyranny manifested itself in almost every breast. And having received the last stab to the agonizing affection that bound them to the mother country, they were impelled, in the strength and firmness of a manly spirit, to "acquiesce in the necessity that denounced their separation."

There was a vast amount of Christian heroism embodied in this determination ; but it was in defence of freedom of conscience in matters of religion as well as of politics ; and this gave them confidence and hope, and nerved them with energy to the successful accomplishment of their grand and daring exploits. Under any circumstances, a true patriot must feel "*Dulce et decorum est pro Patria mori*," it is sweet and honourable to die for one's country. How much more is this the case, when, with country, is connected the defence of religious freedom and the cause of God. Such was the fact in regard to the pioneers of this "land of the free and home of the brave." And on this account, mainly, the most prominent and efficient actors in the Revolutionary struggle never allowed themselves to waver even for a moment. It matters not whether we regard the New England Puritans, or the Scotch, or Scotch-Irish of the middle and southern States, their principles were the same in all their essential features. They were the principles of civil and religious liberty, which are founded on the Word of God, and embodied



in their creeds and confessions. They stood upon the same Platform, adopted the same formularies, and dilligently taught the same doctrines and statutes to their children, publicly and in private. Under their influence, human society has happily been formed at the East ; they have struck their roots deep in the soil of the South, and sent out their vigorous shoots in the great valley of the Mississippi ; and as these are the principles for which our ancestors fought, and bled, and died, and by which we have been sustained thus far, we must most sacredly cherish them ourselves, and order our children after us according to them, and seek to have them propagated throughout the whole extent of our expansive territory ; or, as I shall more fully show hereafter, we are inevitably lost as a people, great, growing, and boastful as we may now be.

Then, if the facts be such as I have stated them, we should, in the celebration of this day, give a prominent place to those feelings of gratitude and praise which are undoubtedly due for the distinguished blessings which a kind Providence has conferred upon us. The Lord looked down from Heaven, and beheld, and visited the vine which had been planted in the wilderness, under his guidance. At the rebuke of his countenance, our enemies fled. The British Lion was made to cower before the American Eagle. The people clapped their hands in token of the gladness of their hearts ; a shout went up to Heaven with the voice of triumph : The Lord Most High had shown himself terrible, a great King over all the earth : He had subdued the people under us, and chosen our inheritance for us. Therefore let us sing praises to God ; sing ye praises with understanding. God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. He maketh wars to cease to the end of the earth ; he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder ; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still and know that I am God : I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of Hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Then let us inscribe the name of God upon our banners ; and as they float upon every passing breeze, let every star and stripe remind us of our vast in-

debtedness to Him who ruleth among the nations, and taught our hands to war and our fingers to fight.

It is deeply to be regretted that the celebration of this day should be connected, as it usually is, with so much of revelry and intemperance. Such a method of celebrating it, is suited more to a nation of infidels, than to a nation who are proud of institutions and immunities which are founded on the Word of God, and without whose acknowledged interposition and continual aid, they could not have been secured.

Intemperance is doubtless one of the crying sins of this nation, and it is probably more alarmingly and shamelessly indulged in at the time of our annual Jubilee than at any other period. It is a burning disgrace that the old, the middle-aged, and the young, should then give themselves up to unbridled licence, and run into every excess, mingling the wine that mocks when it is red and turneth itself in the cup, and the strong drink that is raging, and leads them to trample under foot the laws of order, of morals, and of religion. Our great object should be, to keep alive the profoundest sentiments and feelings of our people towards the great God of Heaven and earth, whose hand so manifestly has been with us from the beginning ; and to pervade the nations with the same spirit and the same characters that achieved our independence and happiness.

There is no class of persons more exposed to temptation and real danger on such occasions, than that of young men. Alas, that they should have such an example set them by those who are their superiors, in years and experience at least, if not in wisdom and manly decorum. According to what is written in Job, "Days should speak and multitude of years should teach wisdom ; but great men are not always wise ; neither do they yet understand judgment." Our young men are the great conservators of the interests and glory of the nation. *They* can make our country a blessing or a curse. Upon them devolves, under God, the momentous responsibility of sustaining the foundations of social order and happiness, and of preserving inviolate and unsullied our in-

valuable institutions, and of transmitting them unimpaired to those who shall come after them. To this end, they must be intelligent and virtuous : For intelligence and virtue are the bulwark and defence of a free people ; without them, liberty is only a name, and our dearly-bought and much-loved institutions will prove “ the baseless fabric of a vision.”

Let our young men, then, receive this day a lesson of timely admonition. Already, we have been opprobriously termed a nation of drunkards. Whether true or false, it is for them to wipe away the foul stain of the charge, by showing themselves to be, at all times and in all places, the firm and unflinching advocates of sobriety and decorum. Let me earnestly entreat you, young gentlemen, to prove by your acts that you are worthy descendants of those noble sires, who made it their first and highest duty to fear and honor God.

Come out from among the vicious and profane, and be ye separate. Touch not, taste not, handle not, the poisonous beverage, which will palsy your physical and intellectual strength, and make a wreck of your moral capabilities. I speak unto you more particularly, young men, because ye are strong, and may now, while the power of depraved habit has not rivetted its fetters upon you, overcome the wicked one.— There is a great deal of wisdom and force in the remarks of Archbishop Tillotson, that “ all vice stands upon a precipice ; to engage in any sinful course is to run down the hill. If we once let loose the propensities of our nature, we cannot gather in the reins and govern them as we please ; it is much easier not to begin a bad course, than to stop it when begun. Our corrupt hearts, when they are once set in motion, are like the raging sea, to which we can set no bounds, nor say to it, hitherto shalt thou come and no further. Sin is very cunning and deceitful, and does strangely gain upon men, when once they give way to it. It is of a very bewitching nature, and has strange arts of address and insinuation. By giving way to one little vice after another, the strongest resolution may be broken. ’Tis scarce imaginable of what force a single bad action is, to produce more. For sin is very teeming and fruit-



ful, and though there be no blessing annexed to it, yet it does strangely "increase and multiply." These remarks confirm the words which, centuries ago, fell from the lips of the wisest of men, that *the beginning of sin is like the letting out of water* ; small at first, it increases with fearful rapidity and violence. It is a sound maxim, then, to resist the '*beginning of sin*,' because we then have most power. Therefore, 'watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong,' 'Cease to do evil ; learn to do well.' In a word, 'Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.' "

To North Carolina belongs the distinguished and imperishable honor of being the first in declaring independence, and in giving an impulse to the agonizing struggle that followed upon the determination to carry out the principles and spirit of such a declaration. This memorable event took place in the little village of Charlotte, the county seat of Mecklenburg, on 20th May, 1775. On the day previous, a large concourse of people of all ranks had assembled, to consult together as to their duty in their pressing emergency.—A convention of the representatives of the people was then formed, and regularly organized. On that day the news of the battle of Lexington came to hand by express, and was announced to the assembly. All was excitement of the deepest and most intense interest ; and under the effect produced by spirited and patriotic addresses from a number of gentlemen of intelligence and great popularity, "the assembly cried out with one voice : Let us be independent ! Let us declare our independence, and defend it with our lives and fortunes." The day following, the declaration was formally introduced to the Convention and by them was unanimously adopted, and almost immediately was ratified by the multitude amidst the most enthusiastic expressions of admiration and applause. Ten days subsequent to this, another declaration, manifesting the same principles and spirit, was adopted by the Convention. A copy of the acts and doings of this Convention was afterwards sent by express to the members of Congress

from North Carolina, which Congress was then in session at Philadelphia. But while the members from North Carolina approved of the spirit of their fellow citizens, and the tone of their resolutions, they, nevertheless, thought them premature, and did not present them to Congress. Let it not be forgotten, however, that the national Declaration, which was not adopted till more than a year after the events to which I have alluded, not only expresses the same sentiments, but in some parts, uses the same language as of the declaration at Mecklenburg, and I have no doubt but that it was, in its general tone and spirit, modelled after this admirable instrument.

Its concluding paragraph, which has so universally been admired, is taken almost verbatim from the last clause of the 3d Resolution of the first paper adopted at Charlotte. More than this: 'The first declaration of independence by *the constituted authority of a State*, was adopted by the provincial Congress of North Carolina, assembled at Halifax, April 8th, 1776; and this declaration was presented to the Continental Congress, May 27th, 1776, nearly six weeks before the national declaration. And still more than this; if we go back a little in date, we shall find that the very first blood shed in North America in defence of human rights and the enjoyment of liberty, was in North Carolina. This was in the battle on the Alamance, between Tryon and the "Regulators," May 15th, 1771. In a spirit of honest pride, then, we claim the honor which is fairly our due. May we, as North Carolinians, never tarnish the fair fame of our noble sires by the adoption of false principles, or the practice of shameful conduct! May the mantle of the fathers fall upon the sons!—May we ever prove faithful and true to their sentiments and practice—to the cause of our country and our God!

As I am in principle and by profession a Presbyterian, and speak to-day as a Presbyterian Minister, from a Presbyterian Pulpit, it will not be considered out of place to remark, that both at the commencement, and throughout the progress of the Revolutionary struggle, Presbyterians acted a conspicuous part. Most of the early settlers of the Southern section of



our country, were Presbyterians of the straitest sect, either from Scotland or the north of Ireland, the latter being descendants of the Scotch, and having been trained with them, in the same political, moral and religious principles. These immigrants had been rigidly educated for generations, in opposition to tyranny, and had always contended for a proper protection of the rights of property and person, and for freedom of conscience in matters of religion. It has been said of this people, and particularly those from the north of Ireland, who are usually designated by the title of *Scotch-Irish*, that, previous to their emigration, "they had advanced far in the knowledge of human rights; were in the high road to republicanism; in fact, were already republicans, without, perhaps, being aware of the lengths they had advanced. In Europe they contended for a *limited* monarchy through all the troubles of the seventeenth century. In America, their descendants, defining what a limited monarchy meant, found it to signify rulers chosen by the people for a limited time, and with limited powers; and declared themselves independent of the British crown." When, therefore, a people of such stern and noble virtues were called upon by their change of country and circumstances, to decide between tyranny and the rights of conscience, they quickly determined as to duty.—They were the first to take up arms in support of free government, and the last to lay them down. The moment they "were placed in circumstances calculated to provoke independence of action, that moment did they declare most solemnly and unitedly that they 'are and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing association, under the control of no power, other than that of God, and the general government of the Congress.'" It is true that some of the Presbyterian emigrants from Scotland pursued a different course.—But they are not, on this account, to be too hastily censured. Theirs were peculiar circumstances. Their conduct arose more from the stern integrity of their religious principles, which led them to swear to their own hurt, rather than from any desire to uphold an oppressive government, or to oppose

the progress of free principles. They maintained mistaken notions of the nature of the solemn oath of allegiance to the British throne, which was forced upon them previous to their departure for their distant home. Doubtless they were ignorant of their true position in their altered circumstances, and "the power of an oath over their consciences was skilfully used to keep them to their allegiance." Happily, their descendants were free from the restrictions that bound the fathers, and in this many of the latter rejoiced greatly in spirit. The great principles of their ancestors reign in the children, who are now among the best citizens of the States, and join heartily in the adoption of the Constitution that guards our liberties, and, if necessity demanded, would certainly shed the last drop of their blood in its defence.

It would seem impossible that an impartial observer of the rise and progress of the Revolutionary struggle, could fail to be convinced that Presbyterians, in general, were its most active and efficient supporters. I feel no hesitancy in expressing it as my unwavering conviction, that to their religious and political opinions and principles, and to their promptness and energy in carrying them out at the expense of their fortunes and their lives, we are mainly indebted for the most free and pure form of government the world has ever seen. As we have already observed, they had been trained in Republicanism previous to their emigration to this country. A monarchy was not fitted to the full development of their views and preferences. Providence so ordered it that they should seek a home in western wilds, where they might show to the world what an oppressed race of Christian heroes might do and become, who, out of regard to the authority of Heaven, and respect to their rights, were determined to be free. Having furnished a basis for the structure of the British Constitution itself to rest upon, they came over the wide waters that they might erect a perfect and beautiful Temple, whose walls should be called salvation, and whose gates should be Praise ; and to which all nations should come, to admire its symme-

try, and to do honor to the wisdom, patriotism, and piety of its founders.

In confirmation of what is here advocated respecting the efficient agency of Presbyterians in promoting the progress of free principles in America, it would be easy to adduce the strongest and most invulnerable testimony. The Ministers of the Presbyterian Church were the foremost in concocting plans, and in leading to concentrated and efficient action in the dark hour of our country's peril. They were found in the councils, and conventions, and general gatherings of the people, on almost all occasions, stimulating their patriotism, and endeavoring to remove the difficulty as to the oath of allegiance to the British Government which some of their countrymen had been forced to take, showing that allegiance and protection are inseparable, and urging to united and harmonious effort against the foes of human rights and religious freedom. Many of them went with the army to act as Chaplains, and subjected themselves to the various dangers and exposures of a camp and soldier's life. One especially, James Hall of Iredell, was both a preacher and a soldier—a captain at the head of a company, and Chaplain of the regiment, in both of which offices he was acceptable. A number of sermons of different Presbyterian Ministers are now extant, delivered with a particular reference to the state of affairs during the Revolution, which abound with the loftiest and purest sentiments of patriotism, and evince the firmest and most unwavering determination in support of the cause of Liberty and their country. In fact, such was their incessant activity and zeal in exciting the enthusiasm of those under their influence, and of thwarting the plans and devices of the enemy, that they became, in many instances, the objects of the emissaries of the British throne; they were hunted as David was hunted by Saul; their houses were watched by day and night; their property and the peace of their families were violated; in some cases, they were shot down in cold blood, simply on account of their burning love



to their country, and their indefatigable exertions in defence of its security and happiness ; others were saved from so dreadful an end, but escaped captivity and death only by the special Providence of God.

One of the number of patriotic men who delivered spirited addresses to the people assembled at Charlotte, May, 1775, and under the excitement of whose earnest appeals, the multitude cried with one voice, *Let us be independent*, was a Presbyterian Minister. "Of the members of the Convention that proclaimed Independence, one was a Minister of the Gospel, and nine were elders in the Church; and all in some way connected with the seven Churches and congregations that embraced the whole county of Mecklenburg." A Presbyterian Minister was a member of the Convention which formed the Constitution of the State of North Carolina, in 1776, and is said to have formed one of the articles of that Constitution, and to have taken an active part in the deliberations of the Convention. And here I will introduce a most interesting and thrilling incident connected with our Revolutionary history, taken from an address delivered at the laying of the corner-stone of a new Presbyterian Church, in Princeton, Ky., by Rev. S. S. Templeton :—"On the morning of our national birth-day, when the Declaration of American Independence was made, when the committee, previously appointed to draft that instrument, made their report through their chairman, Thomas Jefferson, and when it was read, the house paused—hesitated—silence, deep and solemn silence, reigned throughout the hall of the spacious capitol.—Every countenance indicated that deep meditation was at work ; and the solemn resolutions were calling for double energy. At this fearful crisis, when the destiny of our country seemed to be suspended upon the action of the moment, the silence, the painful silence, was broken. An aged patriarch arose—a venerable and stately form, his head white with the frosts of many years. He cast on the assembly a look of inexpressible interest and unconquerable determination ; while on his visage the hue of age was lost in the

burning patriotism that fired his cheek. 'There is,' said he, 'a tide in the affairs of men, a nick of time. We perceive it now before us. That noble instrument upon your table, which ensures immortality to its author, should be subscribed this morning, by every pen in the house. He who will not respond to its accents, and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions, is unworthy the name of a freeman. Although these grey hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather they should descend thither by the hands of the public executioner, than desert at this crisis, the sacred cause of my country.' The patriarch sat down and forthwith the declaration was signed by every member present. Who was that venerable patriarch? you ask. I answer, it was John Witherspoon of New Jersey, whose name is found among the signers of the Declaration, the Magna Charta of our Nation's independence. Yes, it was John Witherspoon, a distinguished Minister of the Presbyterian Church, a lineal descendant of John Knox, the great Scotch Reformer."

There is another point connected with this subject, which, in a discourse like this, I cannot allow to pass unnoticed. It is this; that between the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church and that of the U. S. there is a close and striking resemblance. Indeed, *so* close and striking is the similarity that there is reason to believe that the framers of the latter were familiar with the former, and were assisted and guided in their work by its main features. In a speech of the Hon. W. C. Preston, of S. C., are these remarkable sentiments: "Certainly, it is the most remarkable and singular coincidence," says he, "that the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church should bear such a close and striking resemblance to the political Constitution of our country. This may be regarded as an earnest of our beloved national union. We fondly regard our Federal Constitution as the purest specimen of republican government that the world ever saw; and on the same pure principles of republicanism, as its basis, we find established the Constitution of this Republican



Church. The two may be supposed to be formed after the same model."

Let it be remarked, however, that the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church was first, and not last. The great fundamental principles of this Constitution were adopted by the Church of Scotland from the earliest periods of the Reformation from Popery, and were recognized in her earliest standards. Amid many troubles incident to those times, they were enabled, by the blessing of God, to construct and model this Constitution "according to the word of God, and not according to the will of earthly rulers." Again and again did they solemnly league and covenant together in support of its glorious truths, and to this day, they have been honored of God in maintaining and defending them, amid many perils and persecutions. But the more formal settlement and perfecting of the Presbyterian standards, including the Form of Government, was left to the Westminster Assembly of divines, in which the commissioners from Scotland exerted a directing and controlling influence. This was in the year 1647. Almost immediately upon their completion, these standards were unanimously approved and adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and continue to be the standards of that Church until this day. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland have adopted the same standards; also, all the Presbyterian Churches in the United States have received and adopted them, with the single exception of the alteration of those articles which related to the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion.

The fact therefore is, that the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church is the model according to which the Constitution of the United States was formed. In support of this opinion, I will present you with an extract of a speech by Dr. Wm. Harriss, Chairman of a meeting of the friends of the Free Church of Scotland, at Philadelphia, a few years ago. He says, "we have the authority of the late Chief Justice Tilghman, for stating that the framers of *the Constitution of the United States* were (chiefly through the agency of Dr. Witherspoon, who was one of them) greatly indebted to the

standards of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, in modelling that admirable instrument, under which we have enjoyed more than half a century of unparalleled national prosperity."

It has been customary for Infidels, and a certain class of political demagogues, and some spiritual monarchists and aristocrats, to decry and abuse every thing Presbyterian, Calvinistic, or Puritanical. They laugh mightily at what they call the stern virtues of the Puritan Fathers, and pretend to consider their religion as unfit for a gentleman. We pity the pretensions of such men. They are certainly welcome to their exclusive claims to gentility. We glory in our religion and principles, which were bequeathed to us by the best of benefactors, who, like the worthies of old, "out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

If facts are allowed to speak, it is plain beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the principles of the men who are thus derided and hated, have made tyrants tremble upon their thrones; have given laws and liberty to England, even upon the testimony of Hume himself; have obtained and secured us in the protection of our property and lives; and imparted the only right views of laws and government, and freedom of conscience, to the civilized world. The enemies of such a noble and chivalrous race, would, probably, if all things were favorable, be willing to adopt and carry out the motto of the house of Stuart, "*No Prelate, no King.*" Royalists at the commencement of the Revolution, according to accredited history, they were its bitter and uncompromising opposers throughout. Even now, retaining in a great measure their old prejudices, and being republicanized only in part, they are heard not unfrequently to speak disparagingly of our government, while they extol the government of England as embodying the very perfection of excellence and beauty. In fact, men who will indulge their narrow views so far as to scout at the Reformation, and to denounce it as "a schism, a sin, and a deadly heresy," must needs speak disparagingly of our free institutions; for the two are intimately and inseparably connected—they live and reign, or decay

and fall together. It is certainly not to be wondered at, that from among those who, all their lives, have been subject to a spiritual monarchy in matters of religion, some at least should show a decided leaning to the same form of government in civil matters, and should love England more, and America less. But we shall search in vain for the record of a single Presbyterian Minister, who, like the Ministers of the State, judged the advocates of the Revolution as rebels, and delivered them over, not only to the gallows, but to the damnation of hell, for their resistance to the oppression of the British throne.

It was not to any peculiar physical or intellectual advantages that our ancestry were indebted for success in their noble undertaking to rear upon the ruins of tyranny a free and enlightened government; but to the strength and energy of those sterling religious and moral principles which they had been taught as the first lessons of lisping infancy. As we have already observed, their religious creed gave complexion and character to their political notions, and was, in truth, the foundation of their political creed. It is often said, that the times make the men. We believe it more correct to say, the men make the times. Or still better, perhaps, that the times only give occasion to the favorable development of the principles necessary to any pressing emergency. The war of the Revolution was neither begun nor carried out, under the influence of sudden passion, or the violent ebullition of feelings of mere prejudice or intemperate zeal, which rose up in support only of interested plans or party preferences. It was not for "light and transient causes" that our fathers resolved to abolish the forms of government to which they had been accustomed. It was not until "a long train of abuses and usurpations evinced a design to reduce them under absolute despotism," that they felt it "to be their right, as it was their duty, to throw off such government and to provide new guards for their future security." The war of the Revolution, then, was a contest *for principles*—for those endeared and "inalienable rights" with which our Creator has been pleased to endow his rational creatures.



The question now arises, whence did these men derive their principles? The question is as easily answered as asked? In the language of one who has spoken well on this point—"Their moral principles were derived from the words of Him who lives and abides forever; and the commands of God, and the awful retributions of Eternity, gave force to these principles, which became a living power, and a controlling influence. Their children were early taught to read, and exercised in reading the Bible every day; and became familiar with the word of God in the family, in the school, and the house devoted to the worship of the Almighty God. The circle of their instruction was circumscribed; but the children were taught to speak the truth, and defend it—to keep a conscience and fear God—the foundation of good citizens, and truly great men." The testimony which is here given as to the source from which our ancestors derived their principles, is the same as that of all intelligent and honest men. Hon. Daniel Webster, in his Bunker Hill address, distinctly remarks concerning the American Colonists, that "the *Bible* came with them." And it is not to be doubted that to the *free and universal use of the Bible* it is to be ascribed that in that age men were indebted for right views of civil liberty. The Bible is a book of faith and a book of doctrine; but it is also a book which teaches man his *individual responsibility*; his own dignity and equality with his fellow-man. In an address before the American Bible Society a few years ago, by Hon. John Cotton Smith, its venerable President, it was stated as "an historical fact to be ever remembered, that the national Constitution itself owes its existence to that spirit of mutual concession of its framers, which, after months of fruitless discussion, was produced by the blessing of God upon a portion of his word, selected and eloquently enforced by the immortal Franklin, and which, like oil on the troubled waters, allayed the spirit of discord and brought their deliberations to a united and glorious result, thus evincing to an admiring world that the adorable author of the Bible, who had borne the American people triumphantly through the contest for national sovereignty, was still their Almighty Guardian."

I may also here introduce the remark of Hon. Theo. Frelinghuysen, in a public address in which he alludes, in terms of high commendation, to the first American Congress; "*That Congress*," said he, "was a *Bible Congress*; Washington was a *Bible General*; the Revolutionary army was, to a great extent, a *Bible Soldiery*." And we may add, that now, looking back to what we once were, and reflecting upon what we now are, and casting the mind forward to what we may yet be in the providence of the Almighty, we must feel that we are indebted for all our blessings and hopes, to the faith, doctrines, and principles of the Bible. Yes; our fathers brought to these shores the Bible—the open Bible—and with it, the very core of the reformation. And at this day, the same blessed volume, together with the spirit of free inquiry engendered and cherished by its elevating and purifying truths, constitute the only sure stay of our political and religious rights. The Bible—yes, the Bible—is "the beacon word of Liberty." It is "that on which Freemen live;" and in the maintenance of its unclouded and ever-enduring principles and truths, our ancestors perilled their all. May we prove the worthy descendants of such worthy sires; and may we transmit the sacred deposit received from their hands, unimpaired to those who shall come after us, that they, in their turn, may hand down the precious treasure, unalloyed, to the generations following!

It is easy to see, from the considerations that have been presented, to what we are to look for the progress of right views of civil liberty, and upon what we are to depend, under God, for the stability of our Institutions. Principles, not men, must govern this country, and the world. And these principles must flow from the same source from which our Revolutionary Patriots derived them—that is, from the Bible. It would be interesting and profitable to dwell particularly upon this point; but the time will allow me to give it only a thought or two.

I believe it to be a sound maxim, that "all human institutions, like those who form them, contain within themselves the elements of their own destruction." As in the human



frame, so in the body politic, we must not only guard against every cause of disease, but must seek, by unwearied care and circumspection, to promote a healthful action of the system. The most we have to fear is from ourselves, and from that general corruption of morals consequent upon casting off the fear of the Almighty, and becoming heedless of the restraints of a general and sanctified intelligence. No government can go on of itself, like a self-propelling machine. Our Laws and Institutions, though the wisest and best in the world, have no intrinsic efficacy to secure our safety and happiness. There must be intelligence and virtue both to direct and control their operation ; or in the process of time, they will be as "the spider's most attenuated thread." It was a forcible remark of one of our most distinguished and eloquent statesmen, that "government is not a mere piece of mechanism, that needs but to be wound up right, to go right forever—but it is a moral process, calling for good intentions, for honesty, for good conduct." It should be remarked, however, that for the production of real honesty of purpose and uprightness of conduct, the influence of true religion is indispensable. This is a selfish world, and often, the individual who boasts the loudest of his patriotism and honesty, is under the control of a decidedly partizan spirit, and is actuated by the most supreme and ungovernable narrowness. On this account we hold, that our only safety is in that impressive sense of religious obligation on which true virtue is based ;— in "that fear of Heaven, which expels all other fear," and in that conscientious "regard to duty, which transcends all other regard," and which is the result of a deep seated principle of inward reverence for divine authority. This is the "Rock on which we build ; all is sea besides."

In speaking of the means by which freedom and security may be made compatible, Gov. Hammond, in a message to the Legislature of S. C., in Dec. 1844, remarks : "Ignorance and free institutions cannot co-exist. An ignorant people can never long have any other than a despotic government.— They are not fit to be free ; and though they may possibly achieve, they cannot maintain their liberty." To the same

effect are the remarks of an intelligent and experienced American gentleman, in a book on Education : "Our very freedom," says he, "will prove our bane, unless the people, the original source of all power, are so far enlightened as to be able to exercise the various functions of power aright. It is possible that a nation may be well governed, where the body of the people are ignorant; but it must be a government in which the people have no choice." The intelligent and candid author of "Democracy in America," has given a similar testimony. In seeking for causes adequate to the production of the marked difference there is between the state and condition of North and South America, he admits that "the American laws are good, and that to them must be attributed a large portion of the success which attends the government of this country: but he does not believe them to be the principal cause of that success." He therefore, attributes the order and prosperity that exist here, to the *manners* of the people, i. e. as he understands the word, to those moral and intellectual characteristics which grow out of their practical education, and the influence of religion, which, in his own forcible language, "has been most thoroughly amalgamated with liberty." "Too much importance," says he, "is attributed to legislation, too little to manners. I am convinced that the most advantageous situation and the best possible laws cannot maintain a constitution in spite of the manners of a country; while the latter may turn the most unfavorable positions and the worst laws to some advantage. Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot."

If it be true, then, that the only sure palladium of our liberties is, the intelligence and virtue of the people, we should seek thoroughly to educate them in right principles of government and morality. But it will appear from what has been said, that in a correct system of education is necessarily involved, not only the cultivation of the intellectual, but also the moral powers of man. Simple knowledge, without the wholesome restraint of correct habits and virtuous principles, is a curse instead of a blessing. It is useful or pernicious, according as the passions of men are restrained and sub-

dued, or are left to all the lawlessness of natural and unbridled corruption. It has been compared to the power of the horse which, when held in and directed by bit and bridle, is useful in bearing burdens, and drawing loads ; but when unrestrained, breaks his bridle, and dashes to pieces the carriage he draws. It is like the water of a large pond, which, if properly conducted by trenches, renders the surrounding fields fertile; but when it bursts its banks, sweeps every thing before it with a desolating overflow. It is like a newly-constructed and perfectly arrayed steam-vessel, which, with a steady Engineer and trustful pilot, ploughs her unobstructed way and accomplishes with satisfaction her journey ; but with an unskilful pilot, or drunken or careless Engineer, spreads consternation and ruin around her.

Knowledge, then, to be useful, must be directed and controlled by religious principle. We avow our unwavering conviction that, in a country like ours, the heart, as well as the mind, must be educated, and that upon this depends our safety and happiness as a nation. We would seek to enrich the minds of our whole people with the pure, enlightening, refining, and life giving principles of christianity. And in expressing this conviction, we do nothing more than did the immortal Washington, who, in his Farewell Address, solemnly admonished his countrymen, that “of all the dispositions which give prosperity to a nation, *Religion and morality are indispensable supports.*”

In conclusion then, we would say, that in opposition to the liege adherents of Rome and the enemies of our country and of our Protestant religion and Protestant government, we contend, as our fathers contended, for an open Bible, and for a thorough indoctrination of our children, and youth, and people generally, in the liberty and purity of its truths. This, and this only, will curb the maddened passions of men; it will guide and moderate their desires—hush the raging billows of popular violence—give efficiency to our laws—check extravagance, dissipation and revelry—“impart generous and lofty sentiments—a high and controlling sense of duty—force of character to meet responsibilities, and firm-



ness to encounter trials." We would therefore resolve, in the spirit and power of its Heavenly author, to live *by* the Bible, and, if need be, to die *for* the Bible.

And let it be observed, that the importance of the education for which we contend, is increasing every year in proportion to the vast influx of emigrants from foreign shores, the increase of our native population, and the expansion of our people over a wider territory. The recent famine and consequent sickness in some parts of Europe, have quickened emigration to this country to an almost incalculable degree. It is said that during the last two months one hundred and twenty thousand persons from Ireland alone, left for America, and that "the extent of the exodus seems only to be limited by the means of getting away." An intelligent Clergyman of the U. S., writing from Ireland, May 20th, 1847, says: "The ports are overrun with people going to America. The munificent generosity of our countrymen, in sending them so many cargoes of breadstuffs, has stimulated emigration to the States. Among the emigrants from the North of Ireland, there will be found many industrious and worthy families, that are a real loss to their own country. But the mass of those who go from the Romish districts, are without instruction, without religious principle, without habits of industry, without any thing that might fit them to earn a comfortable livelihood, either at home or abroad." Ah, what would have been the effect, had the same amount of vice and ignorance, now sent in masses from Europe, been sent to little Jamestown, or the Plymouth Rock, or the Carolinas?

If at any future period of our history as a nation, we should, in a great measure, become imbued with the principles and practice of Infidelity; if in a moment of inconsideration, we should renounce our allegiance to the Almighty, and refuse obedience to his wholesome restrictions; if we should generally, neglect the religious and moral training of the children and youth of the land, and with them, discard the Sabbath and the sanctuary; if our young men should become wild and ungovernable, intemperate, profane, and dissolute, mocking at the counsels of their fathers, and des-

pising to obey the instructions of their mothers; if our daughters should be trained to habits of extravagance and folly and become haughty and vain; if men in high places should become generally depraved and dissolute;—then may *Ichabod* be written upon our banners, and walls, and bulwarks, and palaces, and upon the posts of the doors of our houses. *The glory is departed!* The ardent and cherished hopes of millions will be disappointed. The beautiful temple of Liberty, which our ancestors reared at such an immense sacrifice of treasure and life, will tumble into ruins. And it may truly be said, that “If freedom shrieked as Kosciusko fell, what will be her emotions when she sees the *nation* fall for which Kosciusko considered his blood a sacrifice almost too mean to be offered.”

Then, “let us not be high-minded, but fear. Let us stand in awe, and sin not. Let us bless the Lord for his benefits; for He is a great God and terrible, and He alone doeth wondrous things. Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.” “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”

God bless our native land,  
 Firm may she ever stand  
     Through storm and night!  
 When the wild tempests rave,  
 Ruler of wind and wave!  
 Do thou our country save,  
     By thy great might.

For her our prayer shall rise,  
 To God above the skies;  
     On him we wait:  
 Thou who hast heard each sigh  
 Watching each weeping eye,  
 Be thou forever nigh:  
     God save the State!—



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